

Schlafly: Carter proposal hurt ERA

By Diane Andersen

President Carter's proposal to require women to register for the military draft has "put the nails in the coffin" of the Equal Rights Amendment, according to Phyllis Schlafly, national chairman of the Stop ERA movement.

Schlafly spoke to more than 500 people in the Nebraska Union Wednesday, many of whom wore cards with "ERA" on them. Her speech was sponsored by the Young Americans for Freedom, of whose national board Schlafly is a member, and The Young Americans Foundation, a Washington-based group that supports conservative speakers on college campuses.

Schlafly said that because Congress rejected the move to draft women, it showed that American people are against the ERA. She said the ERA is the biggest fraud ever put over on the American people because it will not give women any rights.

"Women have all the constitutional rights men do," she said. Schlafly said the Equal Employment Act of 1972 is "enforcing very aggressively" equal job opportunities for men and women, which she supports.

What Schlafly said she opposes is "sameness of treatment of the sexes" which would be created by the ERA in every area, with no exceptions possible except by another Constitutional amendment.

Women are not the equals of men in physical strength, she said, and so should not be forced to serve in combat positions in the military.

"The experience of all world history tells us that men better defend a country than females," she said. Most women only have 55 to 60 percent of the strength men have, and so would not be able to survive as well in a war, she said.

Bomb threat forces statehouse evacuation

A Wednesday afternoon bomb threat gave Nebraska's state senators a short reprieve from their legislative duties.

An unidentified caller, who officials have not been able to identify, contacted the state emergency operator about 4:30 p.m. and told the operator that a bomb had been planted in the capitol building.

The building, which houses almost 1,000 employees, was evacuated at 4:34 so police and fire officials could search for the bomb. The search proved fruitless.

Senators and other workers went back into the building 40 minutes later, after state and local officials had completed the search.

Capitol employees were not unprepared, however, for the eventuality of a bomb threat, said Harland Johnson, technical assistant for the Legislature.

Johnson said unit leaders had been selected for various portions of the building and were instructed by bomb experts a month ago on how to handle a bomb threat.

Bomb threats at the capitol are not unusual, Johnson said. Many threats are received each year, but this one is the only recent one that has appeared serious enough to evacuate the building, he said.

Brent Stevenson, director of administrative services, said that even though the caller did not specify a time when the bomb was to go off, the officials involved had felt it safe to allow employees back into the building.

Fifteen percent of women in the military today are pregnant, she said.

"The purpose of the armed forces is not to be a maternity ward," Schlafly said.

"Somebody tell me what is fair about taking my 20-year-old daughter (for the draft), but not my 23-year-old son, my 25-year-old son or my 29-year-old son," she said when members of the audience questioned her position on the draft.

When Title IX was amended to allow separation of the sexes for school sports and certain single-sex colleges, dorms, fraternities and sororities, Schlafly said, "We learned the lesson that there are certain people who like single-sex education."

She said all institutions, including private schools, would have to enroll both sexes to conform to the ERA if it is ratified. She added that the ERA would mean a "tremendous transferral of power from the states to the federal government," because Congress has been made solely responsible for implementing it.

Schlafly criticized ERA supporters for changing the ERA to being "rigid and absolute" in its language and stripping it of all qualifying amendments that might be used to make exceptions for pregnancy or physical differences between men and women.

She also said the extension period to allow more of the 38 required states to ratify the ERA is a "crooked extension" based on a simple majority vote of Congress, not the two-thirds majority it requires.

That issue is now being considered in an Idaho federal district court, she said.

"We've been very successful in defeating the ERA in state legislatures," she said, explaining that the backers of the amendment have a "net score of zero" in the last seven years. During that time, five states have ratified the amendment and five have rescinded previous ratifications of ERA.

"President Carter has done all he can" to get it ratified Schlafly said. She said that despite heavy economic pressures on legislatures, the people vote ERA down every time it is put on the ballot.

ERA would give the U.S. Supreme Court a "blank check" to interpret its meaning, she said, adding still more power to the federal government.

"I am for the equality of economic opportunity," Schlafly said, adding that it already exists. "I am for the institution of the family," she said.

She said she supports Ronald Reagan for president because he is against the ERA.

The answer to any sex discrimination that still exists, Schlafly said, is not in the ERA but in "specific legislation aimed at specific problems" that would be flexible enough to allow exceptions to be made to account for the difference between the sexes.

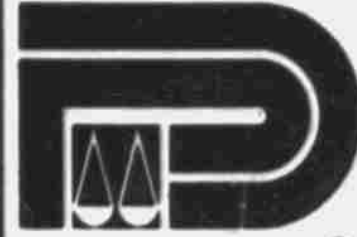
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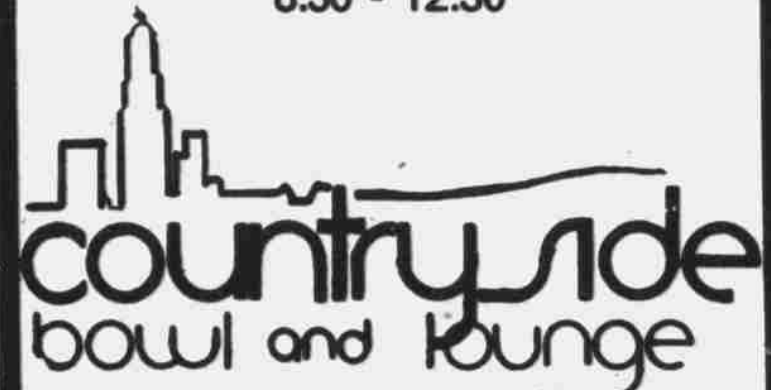
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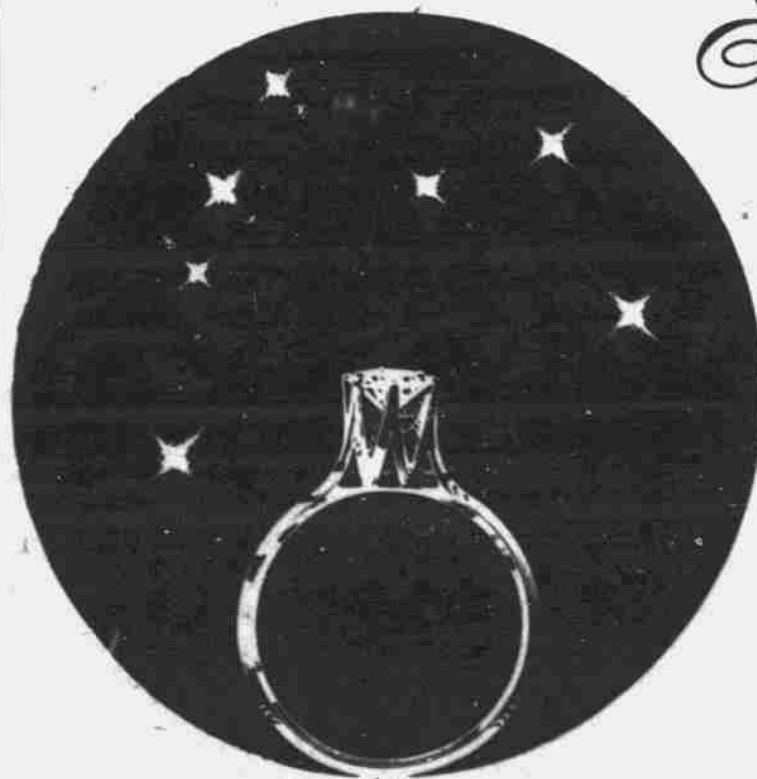
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